

Date: June 12, 2007

To: House Commerce Committee

From: Smoke-Free Ottawa
Marcia Knol, Chair

Re: Support for HB 4163

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today and for receiving written testimony regarding House Bill 4163 which would provide smoke-free indoor air in all worksites, including restaurants and bars, and in public buildings. I am Marcia Knol, Chair of Smoke-Free Ottawa, a county-wide coalition in Ottawa County dedicated to creating a healthier community through tobacco-free living.

I would like to briefly present local Ottawa County data that we have gathered which demonstrates the concern and need for protection from the serious health hazards of involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke. I hope this will be of general interest and use, but of particular interest to those Representatives here who represent the citizens of our county.

A 2006 Adult Tobacco Use and Attitudes Survey of Ottawa County indicated that:

- ☐ 90% agree that the presence of secondhand smoke poses a serious health risk for non-smokers
- ☐ The following percentages of residents favored government policies that restrict the right to smoke indoors in the following places:
 - 83% - public buildings
 - 73% - restaurants
 - 73% - workplaces

A 2007 Ottawa County Survey on Drug Use Patterns and Attitudes in the Adult Population indicated that:

- ☐ 88% of our adult population are non-smokers
- ☐ 86% would prefer smoke-free workplaces, 81% smoke-free restaurants, 68% smoke-free bars

A 2007 Smoke-Free Ottawa Campaign to Increase Smoke-Free Dining Establishments found that:

- ☐ Over 75% of Ottawa County restaurants and bars are currently smoke-free
- ☐ 15 establishments have become smoke-free in the last 6 months
- ☐ 89% of county restaurants experienced either an increase in profits or no change following adoption of a 100% smoke-free policy
- ☐ 76% of restaurant owners and managers in Ottawa County would support legislation that would require all restaurants and bars to be smoke-free indoors.

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I would like to share a few quotes with you from area restaurateurs:

"We have had numerous guests thank us for being smoke-free. I believe it has helped business rather than hurt us. We were concerned that guests might leave when learning we did not have a smoking section, but that has not happened once. We are very pleased with our decision to make Boatwerks a smoke-free environment."

- Tom Webb, Chef/Owner, Boatwerks Restaurant, Holland, MI

"A smoke-free environment is always better for both employees and customers. We should have statewide smoke-free legislation for all public places."

- Chan's Restaurant, Spring Lake, MI

"It [smoking] should be prohibited in all public areas."

- Anonymous owner

"We would personally love to go smoke-free, but, honestly, I'm afraid that we might lose business. I wish the state would do it so that it's healthier for everyone and there is a level playing field for business."

- Anonymous owner

"We're opening our new restaurant as a 100% smoke-free place right from the start. I know other places would like to do the same, but they are afraid of losing smokers' business to the restaurant across town. I'd really like to see Michigan pass smoke-free legislation that protects the health of the public and restaurant workers - and makes this a non-issue for business. I'm not waiting, though."

- Tim Overway, Owner, Ottawa Beach Inn and Hog Wild BBQ, Holland, MI

So many business owners understand that this is a serious health issue for their patrons and employees, but they would like the security of a level playing field for their business' sake. I hope you will support this bill and demonstrate a strong concern for public health and business and taxpayer costs related to the health care and economic burdens of secondhand smoke.

Thank you.